

News



New Jersey
Office of the Attorney General

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NEW JERSEY STATE POLICE OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT MONITORING TROPICAL STORM IRENE

Trenton, NJ - Colonel Rick Fuentes, Superintendent of the New Jersey State Police and Director of the State Office of Emergency Management, today issued a reminder that the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is monitoring Tropical Storm Irene and is prepared for the storm's development over the weekend and into next week.

As of noon Friday Irene was 890 miles southeast of New Jersey. Due to current weather patterns, a specific prediction cannot be made as to whether the storm will affect New Jersey or other parts of the East Coast, but forecasters expect the storm could become a Category 1 Hurricane within 24 hours.

"The policy of New Jersey's Emergency Management System is to stay ahead of all possible developments," said Major John Hunt, supervisor of the Office of Emergency Management. "To that end our Regional Operations and Intelligence Center (ROIC) personnel are watching this storm and keeping in constant contact with the National Weather Service, with FEMA officials, and with our partners in each of the state's counties. As always, we are more than ready to help the people of New Jersey safely negotiate any emergent situation."

Residents are advised to follow Tropical Storm Irene on the Weather Channel and through their local media weather outlets. Experts at the Office of Emergency Management noted that while weather forecasters are often unable to predict exactly where and when a coastal storm might strike and how severe it might be until less than 12 hours before the storm hits land, shore residents are reminded that they must allow sufficient time to safely evacuate threatened areas. To keep people thinking about emergency preparedness, the state OEM reiterated that several basic safety reminders can help get people through a severe storm or disaster event.

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Preparedness tips and evacuation routes can be found online by going to the State Police website at www.njsp.org, clicking on the Office of Emergency Management icon, then clicking on the Hurricane Safety icon. For those not online, some tips include:

- Have batteries and flashlights available in case of a power outage
- Store water for drinking and washing in containers and in your bathtub
- Prepare an emergency kit to take with you when you evacuate
- Identify/prepare the transportation you will use to evacuate
- Know your threat and the evacuation route to use
- Prepare your residence for the storm
- Evacuate when recommended by emergency management officials

Col. Fuentes also said that the Office of Emergency Management, located at the W. Trenton State Police Headquarters, tracks not only coastal storms, but any natural and/or man-made disaster with the potential to create a public safety threat for New Jersey residents. The State Police OEM is in place to assist and support county and municipal officials during times of emergency.

To aid in the orderly evacuation of threatened areas, New Jersey's state, county and municipal emergency management officials have developed plans aimed at reducing confusion and danger to the public. Emergency planning concerns focus on the analysis of potential hazards; vulnerable populations; use of shelters to house evacuees; anticipated population behavior; and the stability of transportation systems and evacuation routes. To further aid in the evacuation of coastal areas, "Coastal Evacuation" signs have been placed along selected routes to help direct evacuating traffic.

If the National Weather Service issues watches or warnings for hurricanes or floods, the state OEM will post them in New Jersey.

A **Hurricane Watch** would be issued for a coastal area when there is a threat of hurricane conditions within 24-36 hours. It means residents must obtain supplies, secure the home and prepare to evacuate. A **Hurricane Warning** would be issued when hurricane conditions of strong winds, high water and storm surge are expected in coastal areas in 24 hours or less. It means residents must take action and prepare for possible evacuation.

A **Flood Warning** would be issued as an advance notice that a flood is imminent or is in progress at low-lying or flood-prone locations. Flood warnings are forecasts of impending floods and are issued by the NOAA Weather radio, local radio and television, and local emergency management agencies. A **Flash Flood Watch** would be issued when flash flooding is possible within the designated watch area. It means residents must be alert. A **Flash Flood Warning** would be issued when a flash flood has been reported or is imminent. It means residents must take necessary precautions.

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